



PRESS RELEASE

House Armed Services Committee

Floyd D. Spence, Chairman

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PRESIDENT ENDORSES CONGRESSIONAL ACTIONS ON DEFENSE BILL

Today, President Clinton signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (S. 1059). Upon enactment, Chairman Spence issued the following statement:

"I am pleased that one of the strongest bills in support of quality of life, readiness and modernization programs to emerge from Congress in years has become the law of the land. The President's signature on S. 1059 is itself a strong endorsement of Congress's continuing efforts to revitalize our armed forces.

"This bill adds more than \$8 billion to the President's budget request and represents a positive step in the direction of bridging the widening gap between our nation's security strategy and the limited resources the Administration has actually committed to executing that strategy.

"While this bill does not fully address all of the Joint Chiefs' critical requirements left unfunded in the Administration's long-term defense plan, it does provide essential short-term fixes necessary to ensure an improved quality of military life for our service members and their families, a better trained force and more timely modernization of aging equipment."

Highlights of the law include:

- A 4.8 percent pay increase, .4 percent over the President's request, and future pay raises designed to close the gap between civilian and military pay.
- Reform and enhancement of retirement pay benefits.
- \$225 million over the President's request for housing allowances for military families in high cost areas.
- \$1.7 billion over the President's request to address shortfalls in operations, training and infrastructure maintenance.
- \$183 million over the President's request to reduce the growing backlog of maintenance for aging equipment.
- \$135 million over the President's request for spare parts, one of the military's highest unfunded priorities.
- \$3 billion over the President's request for underfunded family housing and military construction programs.
- \$114 million over the President's request for the services' recruiting and retention accounts.

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- \$4.6 billion over the President's request to address a range of technology and equipment shortfalls identified by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
- \$368 million over the President's request to develop and field effective theater and national missile defenses to counter ballistic missile threats and to protect Americans at home and abroad.
- \$560 million over the President's request for National Guard and Reserve modernization accounts.

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A summary of the law's major provisions is available on the committee's homepage at <http://www.house.gov/hasc/openingstatementsandpressreleases/106thcongress/99-08-05confsummary.htm>.